

Your Future Water!



Ten Common Questions About The Los Vaqueros Project



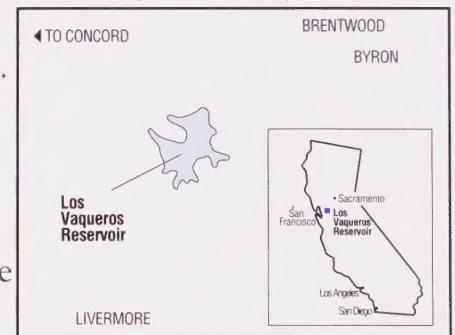
High-quality water that tastes good. Water that is safe to drink. And water that will be there no matter what happens.

These are the primary goals of the Los Vaqueros Project, scheduled for completion in 1995.

The Los Vaqueros dam and reservoir, eight miles south of Brentwood, California, are under consideration in the environmental review process as the preferred alternative in meeting water quality and reliability needs.

For the Contra Costa Water District's 400,000 customers, Los Vaqueros represents a major improvement in water quality and reliability. There are also several recreation, flood control, and environmental benefits associated with the project.

Looking for more information? Here are the answers to the ten most common questions about Los Vaqueros.



1 *I keep hearing that the Los Vaqueros Project will improve water quality. What does that mean?*

During the late summer and fall — and especially during periods of drought — the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, which is our water source, experiences salt water intrusions from the San Francisco Bay. That's because in years of diminished snowpack, there is less fresh water to hold back the bay's salt water. The result for Contra Costa residents: our water quality decreases, as sodium levels become much higher than many of us would like.

The Los Vaqueros Project will greatly improve this situation by storing high-quality Delta water during wet years for blending with the Delta supply in dry seasons.

2 *Does this really mean our drinking water will taste better once Los Vaqueros is built?*

Absolutely. With Los Vaqueros, water quality

will be much more consistent.

The CCWD Board of Directors has set a long-term goal of delivering water with a maximum of 50 milligrams of sodium per liter and 65 milligrams per liter of chlorides. That's a significant improvement over today's standards. Many customers can detect a salty taste to the water at 100 milligrams per liter of chlorides.

With the construction of the Los Vaqueros Reservoir, some of our customers buying bottled water or water filters for dietary or taste reasons will want to rethink their choices. The reservoir could result in a cost reduction to consumers in other related ways too, because the higher water quality would mean longer life for plumbing fixtures and less soap for cleaning chores.

For some major industrial customers in the area, high-quality water will also lead to cost-saving benefits. Operating costs to industries are sensitive to variations in water quality.

3 *I've also heard that "emergency storage" is the other key reason for building Los Vaqueros. Can you explain further?*

Water experts agree that the Delta levees, which play a key role in holding back the salt water intrusion described on the previous page, could be vulnerable to earthquakes or other natural disasters. Likewise, a major chemical spill or similar mishap could render Delta water unfit.

That's why Los Vaqueros is also designed to answer CCWD's needs for additional storage. Today, CCWD's 400,000 customers have emergency water storage for only about three days. In contrast, EBMUD has 120 days' worth of storage and the city of San Francisco has 130 days' worth. Los Vaqueros will put our storage capacity on par with these and other water districts throughout the state.

4 *Have we started building the project yet?*

Construction is scheduled to begin in 1993. The project is presently in its permitting and environmental assessment stages, and moving forward on schedule. CCWD is staying in close communication with the state and federal government entities that regulate the project. A key part of this process is the development of a series of reports that examine the project's environmental effects. Some of the principal areas that are being studied include effects on biological resources, water quality, water supply, traffic, cultural resources, and wetlands, to name just a few.

Another key part of the project is the relocation of Vasco Road as well as numerous electric transmission and natural gas pipelines. Once this is accomplished, construction of the reservoir will begin.

The 100,000 acre-foot reservoir is scheduled to be ready to store water by the end of 1995.

5 *Why are we relocating Vasco Road?*

Vasco Road, which extends from just south of Brentwood to Livermore, is presently in the area where the dam and reservoir will be located.

The new Vasco Road will extend from Walnut Blvd., and loop around to the east of the reservoir site. Besides having two lanes, as does today's existing road, it will also have passing lanes and smoother curves. These enhancements will mean a safer traffic flow for the 7,000 vehicles that use the road each day.

6 *What sort of recreation facilities are being planned for the reservoir site?*

The goals are to provide recreation, environmental research, and education experiences at a reasonable cost while maintaining our water quality and reliability objectives. Several recreational pursuits will be introduced as time goes on. These include swimming in a separate lagoon, fishing, picnicking, open play, camping, boating, and non-motorized trail use. Also planned are a research and conference center, and an education center.

General vehicular access by the public would be limited during high-use periods to the perimeter of the watershed. This will enhance the natural serenity that abounds in the area. Visitors will be able to reach the reservoir and other public amenities via a tram or by foot, bicycle, horse, or other non-motorized means.

The final recreation plan is scheduled to be developed during 1992-93.

7 *I've heard that CCWD is committed to the environment at the Los Vaqueros site. What does this really mean?*

CCWD sees the project as an opportunity to also protect rare natural and historic resources within the watershed.

Although up to 20,000 acres of land are being purchased by the District, only 1,400 acres actually will be inundated, leaving a tremendous open space protected from future development.

The District also believes there is a significant opportunity to improve the watershed environment by careful management, including improving habitats for some rare and endangered species.

Recognizing the unique cultural records this area

(Continued on back)



provides, CCWD is also committed to locating identifiable cultural and archaeological sites and protecting them from disturbance. Local Native American representatives are playing a key advisory role in this process.

8 *Has CCWD looked at partnering with other agencies to build a larger reservoir?*

Yes. Since formal commitment to the project in 1985, CCWD has recognized the potential benefits of joint participation with other agencies — most notably, reducing capital and operating costs. That's why CCWD has expended considerable time and expense in its effort to encourage participants.

On June 21, 1989, however, when it was determined that no other agencies had indicated an interest in the project, the CCWD Board of Directors passed a resolution to proceed with a District-only project, scheduled for completion in 1995. This paved the way for the District to focus onto the specific details associated with the project — and to move forward in providing higher water quality and reliability for its customers.

9 *When it's completed, what will the reservoir cost a typical CCWD customer?*

For a single unit residential customer, total increases associated with Los Vaque-

ros will be about \$13.50 a month. This increase is being introduced over a five-year span which began in 1989. For CCWD customers, this represents a good bargain: high-quality, reliable water without having to incur the costs for a water purification system or bottled water.

(Other important CCWD activities are contributing to further increases during the five-year span. These include construction of the Randall-Bold Treatment Plant in Oakley, upgrades to the Bollman Treatment Plant in Concord, main replacements, increased operations and maintenance costs, etc.).

The bottom line: The Los Vaqueros Project will provide water quality and reliability to CCWD's customers at a reasonable cost. As operations move forward, the project remains on budget.

10 *How can I get more information about the Los Vaqueros Project?*

Write to us at:

Contra Costa Water District
Public Information Office
1331 Concord Ave.
P.O. Box H20
Concord, CA 94524

Or, you can call us directly at
510-674-8175.



**CONTRA COSTA
WATER DISTRICT**